

A RURAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR THE FIJI ISLANDS

By

Veniana Qica Namosimalua

THESIS

Submitted to
KDI School of Public Policy and Management
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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2010

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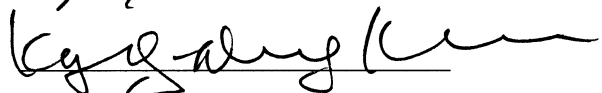
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Abstract

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What type of society did our people envisage when ties with the British colonialists were severed 39 years ago? One would not be far off the mark if the answer to that question was a developed society. So what does it take for a nation to develop? It needs to modernize to be in a state of development which in turn is about improving life conditions.

After 39 years of independence the Fiji Islands continues to suffer from the challenges of development. There is a huge gap between the urban and rural sectors with development mostly concentrated in the urban areas. This study is an attempt at understanding why development has been slow or stagnant in the rural sector. While there have been explanations as to the possible reasons for this state of affairs, such as the decline in the sugar industry and the absence of land reform initiatives, this study specifically focuses on the rural development machinery in the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs as a possible contributing factor to the slow growth in rural development.

In this study the review of the literature discusses theories of rural development which throw some light on the objects of rural development in given societies. The general

lack of information on rural development specifically in Fiji is admitted, except for, however, a study that was undertaken by Dubsky (1986) on the general administration of rural development in the country. While a number of solutions were proposed by him, he did not provide a specific way forward. This study suggests directions to address the challenges presented. The study relies to a large extent on selected government policy documents and also documents provided by the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs as the main Ministry administering rural development programmes in the Fiji Islands.

Some gaps are identified in the current system and the recommendations outline some measures the government can take in realigning its policies in rural development machinery to ensure a rapidly developing rural sector that give value to the lives of its dwellers and improvement to the national economy.

Dedication

**Dedicated to the ‘Ever Present One’ who has been my best friend, teacher and
comforter**

Acknowledgement

Gratitude was one of the things my parents taught me as a youngster and I would be in remiss if I didn't mention those who contributed in their own special ways to make this study a reality. First and foremost I thank my Lord Jesus who is my source and to him I am forever grateful. I thank my wonderful parents (Matai and Adi Mere Qica) who would never in a day forget to pray for me. I thank my dear sister Ela and my work colleague Akisi Tuikabe- Manoa for their tremendous support in efficiently supplying me with the necessary references I needed from home for this study. I am grateful to my Pastor, church members, family and friends for their prayers. I am truly indebted to my dear sister in law Kalo and widow who with children of her own, bravely accepted to be mother and aunt to my children when I was away studying in South Korea for a year. I thank my precious children, Keni, Alita and Asarela for being courageous without Mum for a whole year. My dear husband, Samu is Godsent, without whose love and support I could never be where I am today, thank you for those tireless words of encouragement and prayers. I also thank the staff of the Ministry of Provincial Development and Ministry of Indigenous Affairs for insights and resources they supplied during the initial stages of this study. My sincere gratitude to KOICA and KDI for this lifetime opportunity to study in this beautiful country of South Korea. Last but not least, I am deeply indebted to all my Korean lecturers at KDI especially my advisor Professor Hun Joo (David) Park; thank you ever so much for your valuable insights and guidance.

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CHAPTER 1.0 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Problem

For what would a people of a nation seek, if not to improve their life conditions? Fiji islanders are no exception. Since attaining independence from the British in 1970, they have sought better quality of life; one that would bring them physical and spiritual comfort as well as satisfaction. However, thirty nine years on, the Fiji Islands is still struggling in this quest for quality of life.

As a small island nation with a land area of close to 18,272 square kilometers, comprising 333 islands and a population of 837,271 (2007 Census) Fiji has had its share of post colonial problems. To date, it is still grappling with the challenges of a developing island nation. The country is severely scarred and is still reeling from problems of governance, race relations, poverty, high unemployment and land tenure. Many rural communities have yet to share in the fruits of development so far. To the present day most are still denied access to basic services and utilities and the problem is more pronounced amongst rural communities.¹

In light of this, the question to be asked, is to what extent Fiji has progressed in terms of development? Fiji's first Prime Minister, the late Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, noted that it would be in the field of rural development that progress would continue to be measured.² The Census of Population and Housing Report (1996) reported that less than one third of

¹ 2/3 of poor households are in rural areas – Fiji Poverty Report (1996)

² Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara noted that even after 10 years of independence the rural sector was still un-developed in '*A review of the first 10 years of independence, in Words and Pictures*' 1980.

rural households had access to tap water, with the balance depending on rivers and wells for this basic right.³ In 2004, Fiji's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report highlighted that rural villages and settlements were still undeveloped in terms of water supply and sanitation. Over one-third of households in rural areas were still without safe water and almost three-quarters did not have an improved sanitation system.

This paper is an attempt at understanding why the rural sector has lagged behind the urban sector in development.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study is intended to critically examine whether the sectoral rural development model adopted since the 1980's by the Government has been a contributing factor to the slow development of the rural sector. It aims to answer why the model has been ineffective in the rapid development of the rural sector.

The study attempts to find the weaknesses of the model, and thus explain why the rural sector continues to lag behind and is unable to contribute effectively to the national economy. In place in Fiji is an interim Government which has made an initiative through the 'Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress (PCCPP)',⁴ this study aims to support the integrated rural development approach as a positive one for Fiji. It seeks to provide recommendations on the basis of the model for the effective delivery of rural development programmes.

³ Census of Population and Housing Report (1996) - Bureau of Statistics, Government of the Fiji Islands

⁴ The People's Charter for Change and Progress provides guidelines by which the Government is to govern in the future. Its main objective is to rebuild Fiji so that it is a home for everyone regardless of race, colour or creed.

1.3 Significance of the Study

As a small island nation Fiji is faced with serious problems that have led to political instability with four coup d'états in a span of 25 years. From an island nation that once was well known for the slogan "Fiji the way the world should be" because of its racial diversity and the hope following independence that racial groups would live together in harmony, it is now characterized by high unemployment, urbanization, racial conflict and poverty in rural areas. Based on the 2005 UNDP Human Development Index, Fiji is placed 92nd out of 177. According to the Fiji State of the Nation Economy Report of 2008, most of the social indicators have worsened in the country over the past two decades.

Some studies have attributed these to poor governance, corruption, decline in the sugar industry and problems of land tenure. By reviewing the Ministry of Provincial Development and its rural development machinery interventions can be considered and in so doing, help develop the rural sector and raise living standards of rural dwellers.

Given the history of rural development in Fiji in the last 39 years, it is important that Government seriously review its methods of rural development initiatives and delivery. The study offers an alternative to what is currently practiced and contributes to a better understanding of how this can be made more effectively.

The recommendations outline measures by which the government can ensure that rural areas are an attractive place for those lured by the bright lights of the urban areas in search of better opportunities. The 2008/2009 Household Income and Expenditure reports that in terms of household incomes the average rural household income declined in real terms by 14% while urban average household income increased by 27%. Standards of living on the basis of this have deteriorated in the rural areas.

1.4 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the rural development approach adopted by the Government of Fiji since the 1980s has been a contributing factor to the development lag in the rural sector.

The study critiques the internal Government rural machinery administered by the Ministry of Provincial Development and discusses how it could be changed to address rural development challenges in the Fiji Islands.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The study is limited to a brief critical analysis of what has been a long practice of rural development in the last 39 years in the Ministry of Provincial Development.

While external factors such as land tenure problems and racial conflict would be important issues to explore in trying to understand problems of the rural sector, time constraints do not lend justice to the depth and breadth of the complex research that would be required for such an exercise.

It is acknowledged that rural development is implemented by various Ministries in terms of the services they provide. However, this study focuses solely on the Ministry of Provincial Development. This is because the Ministry plays the leading role in coordinating government assistance with other Ministries whether it be roads (Ministry of Works), water and electricity (Ministry of Public Utilities), health, (Ministry of Health), welfare and poverty assistance (Ministry of Social Welfare), agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture) and business (Ministry of Commerce).

While Ministries have their own processes of delivering rural programmes, the Ministry of

Provincial Development is allocated budgetary funding annually specifically directed to rural development. The study focuses therefore on the Ministry and its rural development mechanism. Given this situation, it would be unjustified to draw conclusions about the delivery of rural development programmes in other Ministries.

While initiatives are being taken by the interim government to revamp the rural sector through a key pillar in the PCCPP, the details have yet to be put to the test.⁵ In addition, while a study of the rural development administration was conducted in the 1980s, it was limited to presenting an explanation in general of shortcomings in the administration of rural development.⁶ What this study entailed is summarized in the literature review section. The present study, however, takes the study further to examining why the integrated model espoused by the PCCPP should be supported.

The study also draws from the Korean experience of the Saemaul Movement in incorporating ideas that could be adopted⁷ and this is also discussed in the chapters ahead. While the study discusses numerous experiences of rural development in various countries in the literature review, it does not necessarily draw aspects from each one that could be usefully adopted in Fiji. However, the aspects that are highlighted and recommended for adoption have been done so because of their suitability and usefulness in Fiji.

⁵ Pillar 7 of the People's Charter – Establishing an Integrated Development Structure at the Divisional Level.

⁶ This study was undertaken by Dr Roman Dubsky of the University of the South Pacific.

⁷ The Saemaul Movement was a Government initiated rural development programme under the leadership of President Park Chung Hee in the 1960's and transformed rural areas into the self sustaining economic units.

CHAPTER 2.0 RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher explains the methods utilized in undertaking the research. The research design was qualitative in nature. Reasons for the choices of sources will be reviewed followed by a description of the interview and discussions used to gather information. Procedures used in the collection and analysis of information received are also explained. The validity and reliability of the methods are also presented in this chapter.

2.2 Research Design

The qualitative approach was used in this study as a means to examining the existing rural development model adopted by the Fijian government. The quantitative approach was not an option given that the focus of the study was the actual mechanism used by the government in delivering its programmes for the rural sector. The exploratory and explanatory nature of the research design was to highlight the thinking and goals of the government on the rural sector development post independence. It was also descriptive to explain the nature of delivery against the background of stated Fijian governmental goals and purposes.

The study described the historical development of the Ministry of Rural Development post independence and examined the framework of stated goals and policy objectives. An unstructured interview was also held with officials of the Ministry of Provincial Development and the Ministry of Fijian Affairs on the processes of implementation, obstacles to effective implementation and alternatives for the future. Although the study

focused on the Ministry of Provincial Development, it was necessary to also hear the views of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs given that they were once a single Ministry before their separation to two entities in recent years.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

For this study it was necessary to gather information from the Ministry of Provincial Development because it is the main Ministry that administers rural sector programmes and has a specific budgetary allocation to it. It was necessitated further by the need to have a clear understanding of its workings in the scheme of the whole of government machinery. For this, information was sourced from its corporate plan, annual reports, and cabinet papers.

To understand the place of the Ministry in government relevant information was sourced from the Government budget, and official statements. The aim of this exercise was to ascertain the degree of priority that the Fijian government placed on the rural sector as reflected in budgetary allocation. In addition, information was also sourced from Fijian policy documents, such as the Strategic Development Plan – Sustainable Economic and Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) (2007), The State of the Nation and the Economy Report (2008) and the PCCPP – Roadmap (2008) and the Siwatibau Report⁸. Valuable historical information was also accessed from the national archives of Fiji which included Ministry of Rural Development Reports, historical official government documents, and commentaries by researchers and government officials prior to Fiji gaining independence.

Information was also sourced from various websites; the Government of Fiji official website, to access recent speeches made in relation to rural development, the Bureau of Statistics website, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) website, to gain a perspective on an

⁸ The Siwatibau Report was a consultancy report on development challenges in the government, (1996)

external assessment of development in Fiji. As background information to the literature review, e-databases were also accessed and relevant e-journals and materials were sourced to elucidate on the topic. The KDI library was a valuable oasis of resources on monographs, working papers and research papers covering the topic of rural development. All of these are noted in the bibliography.

The study examined literature on models of development focusing on rural development. It was important to look at how these models began by examining history and trends. The study further looked at Government policies on rural development from the years following independence in 1970, to determine possible sources of influence. It analysed the model itself, the actors, their interest, strengths and weaknesses against the general framework of policy making and provided views on improvements.

In an attempt at a comparative analysis with Korea, the researcher attempted to source information through an interview with the Rural Development Department of the Korean Government but was unsuccessful. While some literature was provided during an unstructured interview with an official of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Forests; the articles were mostly in Korean and needed translation. However, the translation was not undertaken, given time and resource limitations. Relevant information was therefore sought from the KDI library, electronic databases and the internet.

2.4 Validity and Reliability

This study used historical and up to date policy documents, reports and papers to determine the nature of the trend and changes in Government policy on rural development. The study relied on information from interviews of relevant Government officials of the Ministries concerned on the subject of the study. There is both breadth and depth in examining past and

present practices.

2.5 Conclusion

This study utilized stated instruments under the category of qualitative methods that are valid and reliable with the aim of analyzing the effectiveness of the current rural development model. In the chapters that follow recommendations provide remedies to the limitations observed. Interviews with the officials of the Ministry offer support to the need for alternatives and the literature research provides some answers to effectiveness. Critical examination of the model offers some explanation on the gaps of policy making for rural sector development and provide ideas for improvements.

CHAPTER 3.0 - LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Rural development programmes administered in post colonial countries would mostly be those that have remained a legacy of colonial rule. Under such administrations, programmes were designed to ensure that life in rural areas improved in terms of development of village water supply systems, improved housing, provision of electricity, and accessibility to health facilities and schools. Standards of living were to be improved for those who lived in rural areas so that they were on equal footing with urban dwellers. At least this is what the Government of Fiji aimed for, well after independence was gained from the British in 1970.

According to then Prime Minister of the Fiji Islands, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, the development of rural areas was a solid measure of the progress of the nation. However he added that it would not be about providing a set of handouts freely available to rural people, but rather it was a much broader concept, of which government sponsored and inspired programmes were only one facet (Ministry of Information, 1980). The development of rural areas was the sum total of all activities by government and non-government agencies in rural areas.⁹ At a meeting in 1983 to discuss a Pacific approach to rural development South Pacific islands, the representatives noted that most regional governments view development in the rural areas as a means of increasing foreign exchange and as a source of revenue (South Pacific Commission Report, 1983)¹⁰. However the report noted that the rural dweller,

⁹ The first Prime Minister of Fiji Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara expressed these sentiments when reviewing the first 10 years of Fiji's independence.

¹⁰ This was a report on the Second Regional meeting of South Pacific Island countries to discuss a Pacific approach to rural development, held in Noumea, New Caledonia in 1983.

on the other hand, viewed rural development as a vehicle to escape rural life with its associated problems.

3.2 Theories of Rural Development

Theories and models provide explanations on how certain phenomenon or processes operate. In the literature we are informed of how effective and ineffective interpreted theories and models are. Hite (1999) for instance used the Thunen model¹¹ in an attempt to analyze rural economies. He notes that the most basic understanding of a rural economy is to be found in a simple model of a single urban centre and its rural hinterland. The Thunen model denotes that rurality is synonymous with remoteness and is at least, potentially, measurable on the basis of economic distance.¹² His explanation is useful in one's understanding of definitions of what is rural, as well as the implications and determining strategies for bridging the gap of unequal development.

A commonly favoured theory of rural development is the Integrated Rural Development Crocombe, (1976), (Torres,(ed) (1993), Shamshud-din (1997), Ollawa (1977), Nyber , and Rozelle (1999).

The general tone of their contributions state that the closer people are to the centre of economic and social decisions concerning their lives, the more effective rural development programmes will be. This would be in line with the thinking proposed in this study in the context of the current processes practiced by the Ministry of Provincial Development.

¹¹ The Thunen model of development emphasizes distance and geography as important elements in understanding economies.

¹² 2009 www.strom.clemson.edu/opinion/hite/thunen.html- accessed July 10th 2009

In the case of Pakistan, as stated by Shoaib and Ashfak (2001)¹³ the integrated model adopted there, was built on the model of socio-economic status of the rural masses and involved the decentralization of government administration. In this respect planning was an important aspect of the programme and involved the provision of framework within which all plans pertaining to the province, district and implementation places were drawn. The authors added that these were prepared in line with the national plan for growth in the urban and rural settlements under relevant Local Government laws.

While Shoaib and Ashfak recognized the value of a people-centred approach to development, they however, acknowledged its failures as mostly emanating from weaknesses in the institutions involved. The current study supports this view in examining the government machinery involved and in particular the principles upon which rural development programmes are based. Shoaib and Ashfak¹⁴ point out that a new concept for rural development known as ‘evolution of power’ had also been introduced in their country. They state that it was based on three basic principles; (i) people-centred development; (ii) rights and responsibility and (iii) service orientation. Shamsu-din (1997) notes in the Malaysian case that since independence in 1957, rural development had been the core focus of Malaysian economic policies. The nation’s rural development policy was later embedded in its national agricultural policy in the 1990’s, so that development in this sector was only about economic improvement. This is a contrast to what was prioritized for most newly independent Pacific island countries, including Fiji, where soon after independence, governments emphasized rural development with the aim of improving the lives of rural dwellers in terms of how they lived, their accessibility to basic amenities such as health

¹³ <http://www.dawn.com/2006/01/16/abr10.htm> - accessed July 10th, 2009

¹⁴ *ibid*

centres, roads, employment, and schools ¹⁵ It can be argued that the focus then was not on developing the rural sector for its own self reliance and economic independence. Dubsky (1986) agrees that rural development in Fiji was focused on projects that were community oriented, and not necessarily focused on major national development. He noted that the mechanism used in administering development in the rural areas was facilitated by the area administration system. However in his findings saw those development priorities were decided by the people themselves. Coupled with a lack of funding, expertise and planning rural development was often unsatisfactory.

3.3 Constraints of Rural Development

The literature discusses constraints of rural development in the context of modern civilization. Crocombe (1976) explains that one of these constraints particularly in certain Pacific societies could very well explain the situation on the progress of urban development in Fiji today. He states that the rural populace are often perceived as un-coordinated, isolated, backward, helpless, and dependent and ultimately have a negative image of themselves. He discusses that “most indigenous Fijians are confused because while they are advised to work harder and bring themselves up to competitive levels with other races, they are constantly reminded to cling to their customs and traditions” (p. 8). Such views are inconsistent with the goals of rural development for the Fiji islands in this day and age.

Paia (1981) agrees that the problem lies in Pacific Islanders themselves attempting to break out of the requirements of traditional obligations to achieve material prosperity. Tradition-based institutions which define the place of each individual in society do not accommodate

¹⁵ In Fiji's case when the first Prime Minister was asked about improvements in rural development as the nation approached the second decade of independence, he expressed that he wanted to see improvements in amenities, housing, water, supply and roads.

the concept of individualism, private ownership, and competition. He adds that they promote communalism and anything other than this is considered suspicious, untraditional, and rebellious.

Hite (1999) goes a step further in identifying the failures and constraints of rural development by positing the reasons for failures. He claims that

“...rural development policies tend to fail because the central bureaucratic system imposes top-down control throughout the development process, thus failing to sufficiently promote the reconfiguration of local resources, which is better achieved through bottom-up processes.”¹⁶

He explains that there are two characteristics of rural development;

“the central bureaucratic and local heuristic which ideally should work in cooperation, complementing each other, forming an integrated development system where rural policy would serve to channel resources, establish strategic aims and development models in a top down model and convey information and mediate social, economic, political interests in a bottom up mode”¹⁷

The current study attempts to examine Hite’s findings in the context of existing practices in the Ministry of Provincial Development.

According to Dubsky (1987) constraints of rural development in Fiji were attributed to a weakness of coordination of the institutions, attitudes of members and the lack of funds to administer programmes. While options are highlighted in his study, Dubsky, however, does

¹⁶ Professor James Hite used the Thunen Model to analyse rural economies - 2009 www.strom.clemson.edu/opinion/hite/thunen.html- accessed July 10th,2009

¹⁷ 2009 www.strom.clemson.edu/opinion/hite/thunen.html- accessed July 10th

not come clearly out as to which one should be adopted and allowed to be tested over time. He remarks,

“It should be kept in mind that such proposals can only be tentative at this stage. This is because the constellation of present political and administrative forces or interest may change in the future and because only national leaders or planners may have more adequate information as to the political and administrative feasibility of major reforms in this area.”
(p.14)

The current study thus attempts to proceed from where Dubsky has left off in his findings.

Shamshud din (1997) explains that while the Malay experience had seen some improvement of the livelihood of the rural population through economic development of the agricultural sector, domestic racial conflict was a contributing factor to the stalling and failures of rural development. In that regard, a new approach was used to revive the rural economy. and a change of strategy was imminent with the role of districts becoming significant as they spearheaded projects that involved group activities of farming, co-operatives, rural industries, changes in the village structure and transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture.

Shamshud din also suggested that agriculture could not be the only solution to curbing the problem of rural development because poverty in that sector remained. Other strategies, particularly rural industrialization, should be a catalyst for rural development. He adds that, with relevant infrastructural and people centred programmes, there can be some semblance of equal development as these become aligned with national economic development goals. It is agreed that no one factor like agriculture can be a panacea to rural stagnancy, which is why this study will look at the potentials of institutions and its processes in addressing the research questions.

Ollawa (1977) offered that while many alternatives had been provided in the African case on changing the path of development for the rural sector, none had ever provided real guidance on how it can be followed through and realized effectively at the end. He then discusses a strategy where the role of mass participation in rural development is optimized and points out that optimization is in terms of finding the relationship of shared influence in decentralised structures with governmental inputs that are specifically directed towards promoting popular involvement. One of his main criticisms is that Africa lacks the dynamic capacity to link national development with rural transformation. He remarks that the sectors given top priority in investment allocation are ones that take the aggregate gross national product (G.N.P) growth rates as the key indicator of economic progress. Ollawa adds that this results in biased resource allocation and income distribution favouring a particular economic class; namely the affluent elite. He also says that this includes the political and administrative ruling class, and additionally overlooks the rural sector. In Pakistan, however, the World Bank report on the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (1998). notes that rural development typically exhibits uneven progress and should not be perceived as providing a long-term or permanent solution to development.

3.4 Alternatives in Rural Development

Nyberg and Rozelle (1999) agree that the modernization of China in its vision perceives the rural economy as an integrated part of the modernization process. They note that growth in the rural sector is about creating incentives for the rural industry and in that regard encourage the provision of relevant technology, agricultural research, and relevant infrastructure.

Moengangongo (1973) argues that development is not entirely dependent on economic factors, as social and political factors are also of importance. However, Chambers and,

Feldman (1973) found a connection by saying that rural development is the government's commitment to achieving rapid social and economic development and promoting social justice. "The concern to achieve social justice is also related to economic policy. The equitable distribution of income is clearly one aspect of social justice." (p.41).

Rural and urban disparity is mostly noted in the literature as an aspect of development. Nyberg and Rozelle (1999) agree that "inequality, among other things, is a barometer of the efficiency of an economy as well as its political stability" (p.12). In view of this, the integrated approach in rural development is mostly noted as a favoured option to unequal development. The South Pacific islands representatives who met to discuss a Pacific approach to rural development agreed that there ought to be serious consideration for the equal distribution of resources and employment and opportunities between rural and urban sectors.¹⁸ In their view this was to be implemented through agricultural expansion, identification of growth areas in terms of agro-based industries, fisheries development, service industries, handicraft and marketing. Members in this regard called for serious participation of rural people through the devolution of decision making and resources from the central government to the rural populace.

While the literature has discussed these approaches, there is limited material on whether it has worked in the Fiji Islands. Literature on the integrated approach however, is limited to what was practiced in the years following independence under development plans (DPs).¹⁹ Similarly, in Malaysia the integrated rural development approach was originally considered as a rural development strategy in the early 1970's (Shashud-din 1997).

¹⁸ Report on the Second Regional meeting of South Pacific Island countries to discuss a Pacific approach to rural development, held in Noumea, New Caledonia in 1983.

¹⁹ Development Plans (DPs) as they were known then aimed to amongst others involve rural population in the preparation and implementation of programmes in the rural sector and involved the co-ordination of agencies in rural areas towards achieving these.

There are however in Fiji, current plans to revisit the integrated rural development approach through the 'PCCPP but how it is to be implemented in detail is yet to be tested. While economists, academics and political commentators in Fiji have agreed that there ought to be a serious transition in how rural development is administered in the Fiji Islands, there really has never been any study or proposal on what specifically is to be the way forward. The study in this regard aims to take this further by examining how the current machinery can be improved and a new one suggested for administering rural development. This is to ensure that the rural sector is self reliant, independent and is able to contribute meaningfully to the national economy.

The model of rural development which saw Korea rise from its state of poverty to that of wealth and abundance can be explained in the model of integrated rural development known as the Rural Saemaul Undong (RSU) (Choe Boo, Yang, 1985). According to him, the RSU was a strategy of rural development that addressed problems mostly of a socio-economic nature in the rural sector. The RSU's approach is of interest in this study, given the angle it takes in addressing the issue of rural development. It begins with tapping into the human mind to realize its potential for creativity and diverting this into development. Kyong-Dong Kim (1979) noted that the concept of integrated rural development had essential characteristics. It entailed comprehensive change, and according to him, enhanced change in all of the social, economic, cultural and political spheres of institutions. In addition it allowed changes at an even pace within the community. He also noted that integrated development entailed change with meaningful linkages among strata, sector and regions.²⁰ It is an interesting approach and one that the study examines in considering improvements to the Fiji system. What is remarkable is its emphasis in training and changing the mindset for the

²⁰ Kyong-Dong Kim (1979) explained this in *Man and Society in Korea's economic growth*, Seoul National University Press.

benefit of the people instrumental in initiating changes. Developing leaders in villages is considered one of the most important elements of developing rural areas and government intervention in this regard is equally significant. The role of Government in the Saemaul Undong is examined by Kyong-Dong Kim and explained that it did not enter as a significant agent of change, it however, took on the role of helpful partner in this movement (p.93). The Government took on this role based on its own views that existing sociological factors consolidated this partnership approach. He saw that Confucianism was deeply embedded in the society and authoritarianism and hierarchical structures gave passage to acceptance of leadership. In this respect it was easy for Koreans to accept the Saemaul Undong espoused by its leadership in President Park Chung Hee. In addition the Government was equipped to provide suitable resources to spread the principles and practice of the Saemaul movement. The diminishing role of the government however, only became prevalent when the people themselves took ownership of the rural projects and exercised what Kyong-Dong Kim described as grassroots democracy.

Ban, Moon, Perkins (1980) note that the centralized nature of the Government allowed it to exert pressure on local administrators to perform with a view towards producing dramatic results. The RSU was no exception to this and produced dramatic results as expected. This was even more confirmed by President Park Chung Hee's²¹ own vision and sheer determination to raise the living standards of rural dwellers and develop the rural sector. The importance of good leadership and vision from this lesson is an important aspect of what contributes to an economically vibrant and developing rural sector.

Another way of developing the rural sector was through the set up of small and medium

²¹ President of South Korea from 1963 who initiated the policy of 'development at any cost' using the Saemaul Movement as an example of focused development in the rural sector.

industries which worked in Korea during its early years (Byung, Seo Ryu, 1985). Government policy measures such as incentives in rural areas were offered to firms that could be located in rural communities. He adds that indicators of a changing rural life as a result of rural development are reflected not only in the household income statistics but in terms of contact with the outside world and purchase of daily needs from the markets rather than from the farmers' own production. As a result roads had expanded with available rural bus services shortening the time of travel to Seoul. He further noted that by 1975, 64.9 percent of rural villages had electricity for domestic and productive purposes.

Results of the approach by the Korean Government through the Saemaul Movement were evident as incomes increased, infrastructure improved and contact with the outside world enhanced. According to Byung, Seo Ryu, (1985) so great were the aspects of transformation that in later years it was difficult to make the distinction between urban and rural living.

In the case of Fiji there are disparities when it comes to development between the two sectors and for Fiji in particular as Narsey (1996) emphasizes "it is a society with deep inequalities" (p.1). With two-thirds of the poor households being in rural areas and the other third in towns,²² it is necessary to look at remedies that are realistic and practical.

²² In his Fiji Poverty study in 1996, Fiji academic and economist Dr Wadan Narsey noted that this distribution was similar to the national population distribution then.

CHAPTER 4.0 THE CASE STUDY

4.1 Fiji Background

To understand rural development in Fiji, it is important to describe the context in which it operates. In so doing, one is enlightened on the nature of the society in which rural programmes are being delivered; the challenges and opportunities that exist, thus defining rural development in the country.

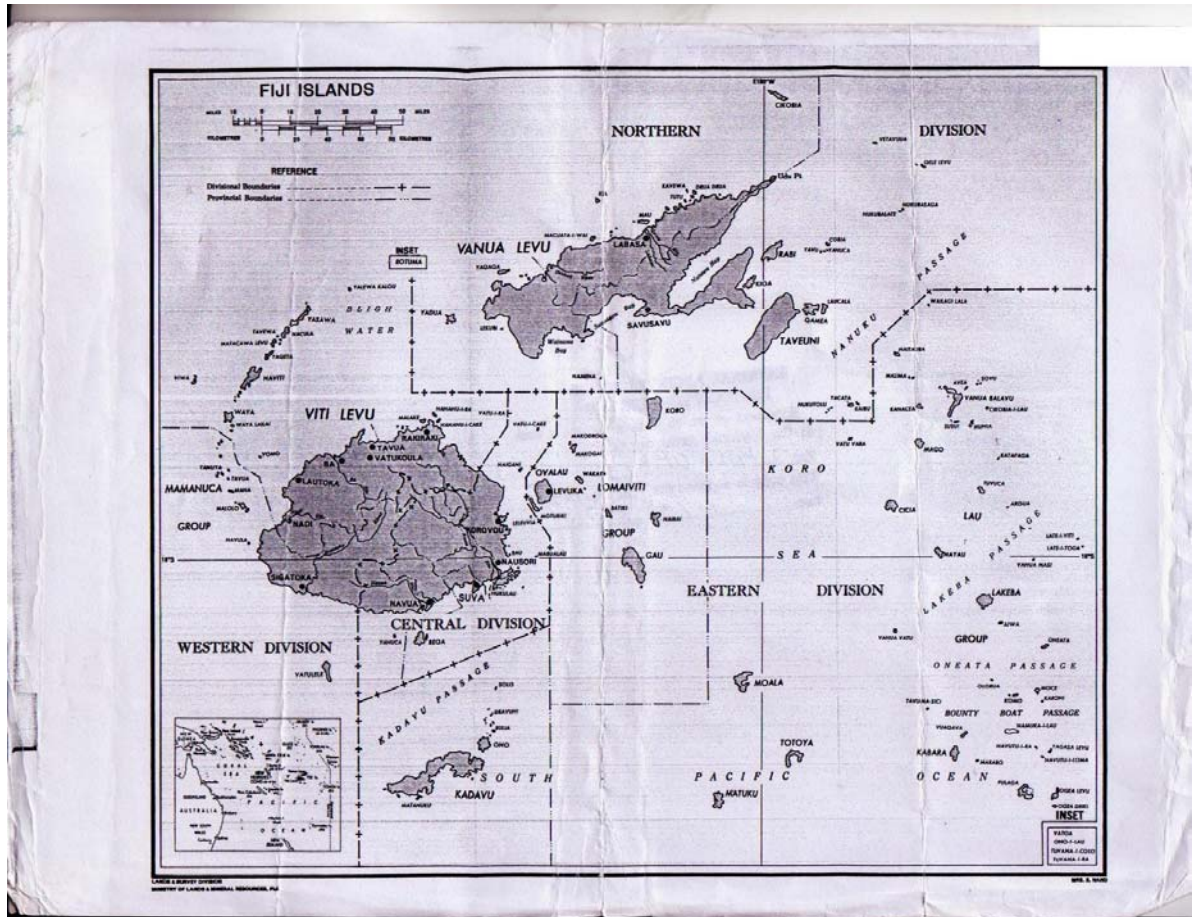
The rural sector in the Fiji Islands is home to about 412,425 people, (49%) of the total population. Over 70% of the economy's natural resource base is found in this sector, and contributes more than 30% of Gross Domestic Product.²³ In 1972, Fiji recorded a GDP per capita rate of 2,798 and in 2007 5,333²⁴ and while it increased annually within a span of thirty five years, progress was at a snail's pace.

For an island nation that once had a GDP rate higher than South Korea in 1947 and equaled it in 1965, the question must now be where did it go wrong? In 2007 the question remains a pressing one, as South Korea surged on ahead with GDP per capita of 23,348. Fiji's rate of 5,333 in 2007 was the rate enjoyed by South Korea in the early 1980's.²⁵

²³ Census 2007, Bureau of Statistics – Government of the Fiji Islands

²⁴ Bureau of Statistics – Government of the Fiji Islands

²⁵ Figures are taken from the Bureau of Statistics – Government of the Fiji Islands and www.gapminder.org respectively



Source: National Archives of Fiji.
(The map describes the Fiji islands and its administrative divisions post independence to current)

4.2 History

According to Fijian history, the Fiji Islands is said to have been settled more than three thousand years ago. The earliest settlers, said to have originated from South East Asia, were the Lapita people named after a pottery (Lapita) which they made. Outside influence began with the arrival of European explorers Abel Tasman and Captain James Cook in 1643 and 1774 respectively. However actual recording of the islands was made by Captain William Bligh in 1789. Thus began interaction between two cultures as Europeans entered Fiji as sandalwood traders and missionaries. The cannibalistic practices of the Fijians slowly faded as Christian missionaries taught a gospel that discouraged tribal conflict and warfare. This came to an end when one of the dominating Chiefs accepted Christianity and with other chiefs following suit, tribal wars ended. Fiji was ceded to Great Britain in 1874 and Indians

entered in 1879 to work as indentured labourers on sugar cane plantations.

Under a colonial Government a sugar industry existed in Fiji with indentured labourers supplying most of the labour. However, when the indentured system ended, most remained in Fiji and became active participants in the economy as retailers, traders and entrepreneurs. The colonial Government decided that to ensure indigenous Fijians preserved their culture, they were to remain in their villages and not partake fully in the commercial aspect of development, but to develop as a community utilising the resources available in their villages. It was only later into the 20th century, in particular the years prior to Fiji's independence in 1970 that they were allowed to venture out and try out activities in the commercial economy that the Indian and European communities were well ahead of by then.

Fiji is a multi-racial and multi-cultural society with Indians, Chinese, Europeans and other Pacific Islanders making their home in the islands. The Fiji Government also administers and has political authority over the Rotuma and Rabi communities which are two island communities with their own distinct cultures.²⁶

4.3 The Origins of Rural Development

To illustrate the connection in this study with what has been observed above, it is crucial to discuss the origins of rural development in Fiji. The basic structure of rural development was laid in 1969 when a study on the establishment of a Ministry of Rural Development was commissioned by the Colonial Government. The result of that study was a report that recommended the formation of a body such as the rural advisory council to cater for the development aspirations of non-indigenous Fijians in rural areas, similar to the Provincial

²⁶ This historical account of Fiji is sourced from Fiji Today, a Government publication produced annually by the Ministry of Information.

Councils that looked after the interests of indigenous Fijians in rural areas.²⁷ In 1970 rural development had been part of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and later was moved to be a unit of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs in 1972. Rural Development became a Ministry of its own in 1983, and by then had its own Minister.²⁸

Since cessation from British rule in 1970, Fiji's administrative divisions, as organised by the colonial Government, have remained the same for 39 years. There are four administrative divisions (Central, Eastern, Northern and Western) See **Appendix 1** for a close up of the divisions. The administrative divisions are headed by Commissioners, who however, do not enjoy independent powers in terms of budget and administrative operations of divisions they head. However, in the years following independence and before 1987, there had been some degree of autonomy with Commissioners as they were given powers to decide on funding priorities for their divisions. While Commissioners are an important aspect of the consultancy machinery in rural development, they do not make the final decision in implementation. The route of decision-making finds its way back to a committee at the Ministry headquarters, reflecting therefore the centralized nature of decision making in rural development.

An interesting characteristic of rural administration in Fiji and which perhaps is a reason for its complexity is the separate process of programmes for the two major races (indigenous Fijians and Indo- Fijians²⁹) and minority groups. The colonial policy of divide and rule under separate systems has never been reviewed up to this day. The country is divided into 14 provinces³⁰ and is peculiar to indigenous Fijians in terms of their traditional identity. The

²⁷ The author of this report was Professor Guy Hunter – Parliamentary Paper No. 6 of 1969

²⁸ Ministry of Rural Development Annual Report 1983-1984

²⁹ Indo-Fijians were brought to Fiji from India by the British under the indentured labour system in 1879.

³⁰ Indigenous Fijians are categorized under certain provinces to denote their tribal groups. The provincial

provinces comprise smaller administrative units, the basic one of which is the village (koro). The village headman (turaga-ni-koro) is elected or appointed by the villagers. Several villages form a district (tikina) and consist of a number of tikinas. Each province is administered by a council and is headed by an executive (Roko-Tui) the appointment of whom must be approved by the Fijian Affairs Board³¹. See **Appendix II (a)** for details.

4.4 The Centralised Development Plans Approach 1970-1987

Since independence in 1970, co-ordination of the rural development programme has been carried out through five year development plans (DPs) administered by the National Planning Office and providing the framework for economic development both for the urban and rural sector.

In summary at **Appendix III** is the institutional mechanism for administering rural programmes. The District Development Committees decide the priorities for self-help projects and the Divisional Development Committees set priorities for projects funded by the government. The Divisional Commissioner presides as the Chairman in both forums.

The District Development Committee is comprised of local leaders of the Provincial and General Advisory Councils and District Heads of Government departments and statutory authorities within the Districts have an advisory role in this regard.

The Divisional Development Committee is comprised of the Divisional Heads of Government Departments and Statutory Authorities as advisers. Members comprise representatives of the Provincial Council and the General Advisory Council. These people

administration was set up by the colonial Government as a form of indirect rule when indigenous Fijians were mostly rural dwellers living in their villages. Fiji Today 2006-2007, p.19. See **Appendix II(b)** for details

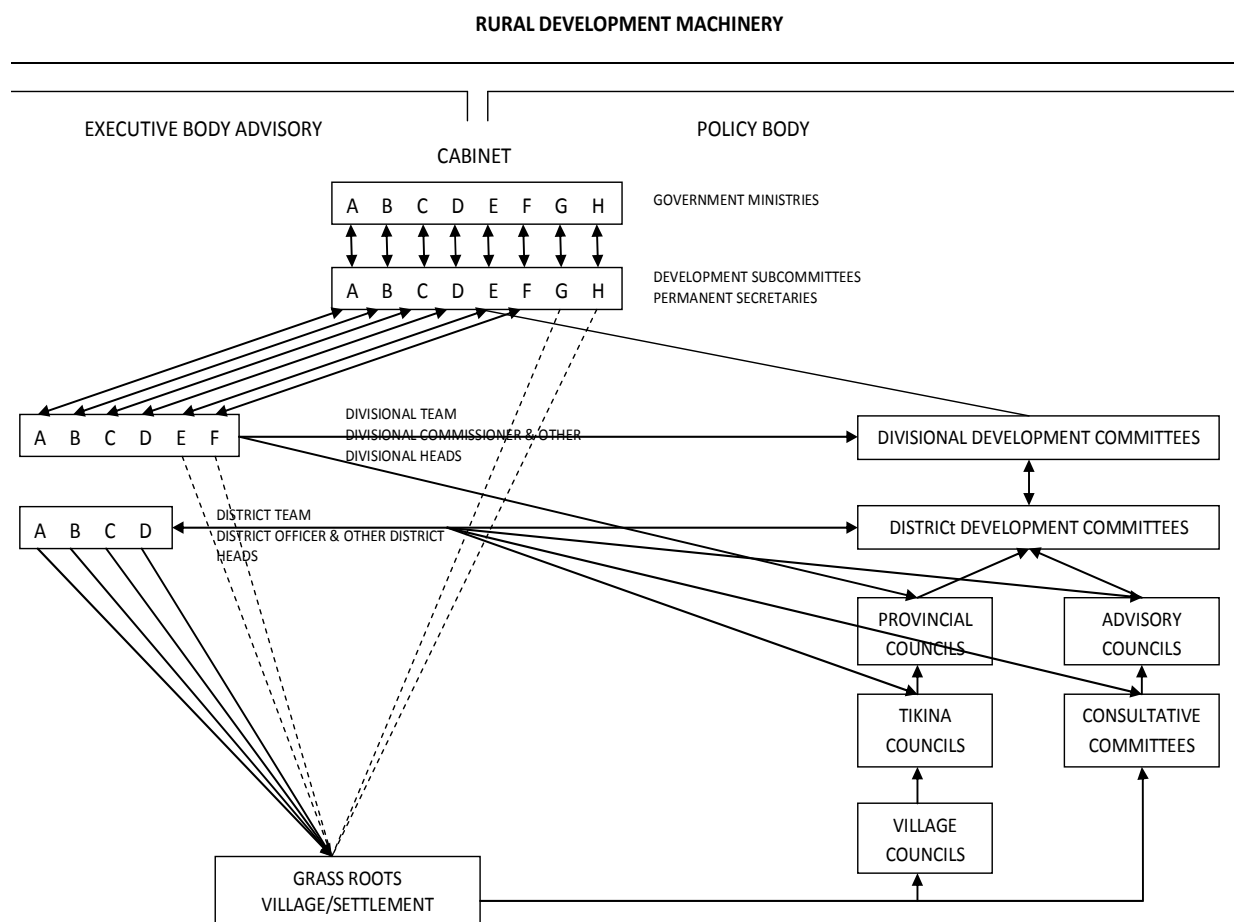
³¹ This body is the guardian of the Fijian Administrative system.

are normally selected from members of the District Development Committee. Members of Parliament representing Constituencies covered by the Division also participate in the deliberations at the Divisional Development Committee level. Upon approval by this consultative machinery, the agencies (Ministries) implement the programmes.³²

Given the narrow economic base, rural development policies serve as significant options to economic production and improving the lives of the rural populace. Therefore the aims of the DPs for the rural areas were to provide stimulation to rural areas to allow improvement through the process of community involvement. The DP's co-ordinated existing agencies in rural areas towards achieving development targets.

The detailed structure of the rural development machinery in the Development Plan approach is made up of about seven levels of administration. These were namely the Village and Tikina Councils (for indigenous Fijians), the Consultative Committee (for Non- Indigenous Fijians), Provincial Councils (for indigenous Fijians), Rural Advisory Councils (Non-Fijians), District Development Committee (with representatives from Provincial and Advisory Councils), the Divisional Development Committee and the National Committee (made up of representatives from various development committees at national level).

³² Fiji Today 2006-2007



Source; Ministry of Rural Development, Annual Report 1986

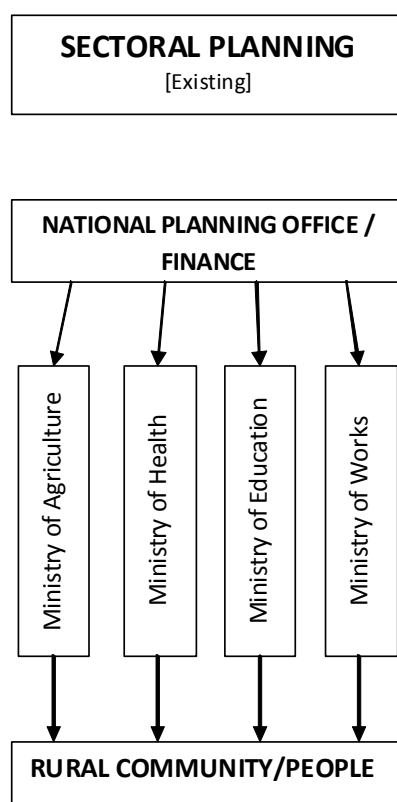
The diagram above reflects the hierarchical nature of decision making. Programmes delivered in the era of DPs mainly reflected Government's primary objectives in rural development and these were to improve the living standards or well being of the rural people, by ensuring that their' basic needs were met in terms of shelter, food, clothes and employment. Rural areas were also to be made productive and protected from natural disasters. Development in rural areas were categorized under broad categories of health, (village improvement, beautification scheme, river and seawalling, footpaths, village drainage, reclamation etc), housing (supply of chainsaws to cut own timber for building of houses and churches), social and cultural projects (community centres, bus shelters, nursing stations and suspension bridges), education (kindergartens, sewing machines, training centres), recreation (village and school sports ground and sports equipment), infrastructure

(roads, repairs and new construction, low level crossing, culverts, gravelling and grading).

Appendix IV illustrates the kinds of projects that were assisted by Government in a number of provinces. **Appendix V** highlights for example the administrative structure that existed then within an administrative division which were headed by Commissioners.

4.5 From Development Plans to Sectoral Planning – 1987 Onwards

In 1987, the Government moved away from centralized planning to sectoral planning, and with this ended the formulation of Development Plans. As a result, short and medium term plans for national strategic development were formulated. This is illustrated in the diagram below.



Source: Ministry of Provincial and Multi-Ethnic Affairs

In sectoral planning the final decision rests with the Minister instead of the Divisional Commissioners. Decisions are made by the Minister whose portfolio administers the nature of assistance sought and for which it has budget provision. In essence, this meant that if a community sought assistance in electricity the Ministry under which the energy unit fell (in this case the Ministry of Public Utilities) would be responsible for its decision and implementation. Planning hence shifted from a divisional perspective to that of a sectoral one where the Ministry itself is the implementing agency. In sectoral planning the Divisional Planning Office is removed and coordination is weakened in respect of program implementation.

In 2001 the Government undertook a comprehensive review of the Fijian administrative system which had also been used as a vehicle for developing rural areas. The review arose as a result of concerns that the system was ineffective in terms of economic development because emphasis was being placed more on the village approach, and therefore was inconsistent with the aspirations of indigenous Fijians' desire to better themselves on an individual level rather than communally.³³ This, however, should be another subject of study in determining why indigenous Fijians lag behind in certain aspects of development such as entrepreneurship and education.

The development of rural areas in which Indo-Fijians and minority communities settled was through the advisory councils; a colonial government construct since 1970. The council system to which Dubsky (1987) referred in his study on rural development in Fiji has not changed much from what it is today. The provincial council for indigenous Fijians and advisory councils for Indo-Fijians and other minority groups are still part of the consultative machinery of the rural development programme today. The creation of the Ministry of

³³ Pricewaterhouse Coopers commissioned report on the review of the Fijian Administrative system 2001

Multi-ethnic Affairs in 2001 strengthened programmes including rural development in economically advancing Indo-Fijian and minority communities. There are two advisory councils (one for Indo-Fijians and one for minority communities) and they are the link to the Government.³⁴

Twelve ethnic communities are looked after by the Ministry and they comprise 49 per cent of Fiji. “The four major programmes of the Ministry are scholarship scheme, community development programmes, culture enhancement programmes, national advisory councils and community development (self-help) projects.”³⁵

From 2006 the national strategic development plan was changed to sustainable economic empowerment strategies (SEEDS) and in 2009 the government has focused planning based on the pillars of the Peoples Charter for Change and Progress.³⁶

³⁴ Refer to Appendix III to see the linkage

³⁵ Fiji Today 2006-2007, p. 19

³⁶ Cabinet Memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs, August, 2009

CHAPTER 5.0 THE CURRENT RURAL DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Introduction

The policy direction for rural development by the current administration centres specifically on three pillars as espoused in the People's Charter for Change and Progress. The pillars ensure the provision of minimum and affordable basic need to ensure good and income security and to strengthen the effectiveness of service delivery to rural dwellers. However in this chapter the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi Ethnic Affairs is discussed in detail to reflect limitations that could significantly be a hindrance to the good intentions of the current leadership.

5.2 The Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs

The Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs is responsible for enhancing the developmental potentials of the rural sector. "It envisages that rural people will realize their full potential as economic and social equals with the urban people in Fiji's society so that they add to and share fully in all facets of Fiji's life."³⁷

The Ministry in this regard plays a significant role in effectively co-ordinating and implementing rural development programmes through the government machinery³⁸. It is important to note, however, that the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Education and Public Utilities also administer rural development assistance under their core Ministerial

³⁷ Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs Annual Corporate Plan, 2009, page 6

³⁸ The rural development machinery is explained earlier in the Development Plan approach

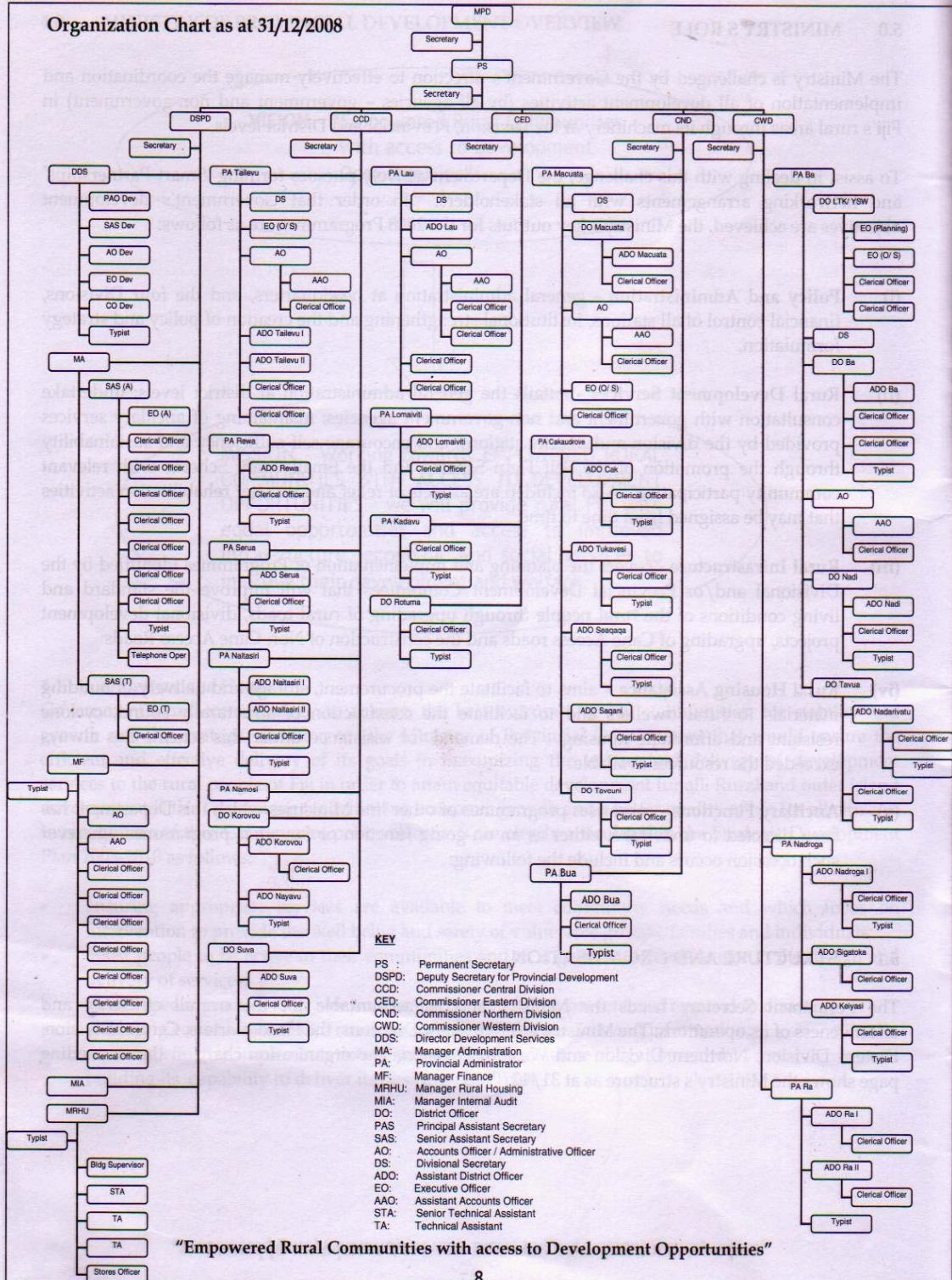
programmes. Such is the sectoral approach applied in current rural development programmes. Commissioners do not have any influence over the administration of their divisions as practiced in the years of Development Planning, however, they are responsible for planning and implementation of the Ministry's capital works programme.

5.3 Governing Principles

The Permanent Secretary is the head of operations of the Ministry and is responsible for its overall effectiveness. The political head is the Minister of Provincial Development. Below is the organisation chart of the Ministry as at December 2008.

Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs: Annual Report 2008

Organization Chart as at 31/12/2008



The Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs has as its vision the social and economic security for rural communities.³⁹ In 1986, however, the Ministry did not articulate any vision but in its objectives pursued the improvement of living standards of the rural people by ensuring that their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and employment were met.⁴⁰

The corporate mission of the Ministry in 2009 is “to be the leading development partner in the enhancement of rural communities’ human security and overall contribution to Fiji’s prosperity.”⁴¹ The Ministry’s 1986 report did not articulate any mission, however, in its objectives captured the idea that it had the mission “to make rural areas more productive and less vulnerable to natural hazards, poverty and exploitation and to give them a mutually beneficial relationship with other parts of regional, national and international economy.”⁴² Given these governing principles there would be some overlap with other Ministries in terms of responsibilities. The Ministry has its own operational units and at headquarters the operational unit is headed by a Deputy Secretary. In the four divisions (Western, Northern, Eastern and Central) the Commissioners are responsible as heads, however, report directly to the Permanent Secretary.

5.4 Programmes

The Capital Expenditure Programme of the Ministry allows Divisional Commissioners to work closely in line with it to ensure that the standards of living of rural dwellers are uplifted in terms of access to basic amenities and infrastructure. Policies are driven from

³⁹ Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs Annual Corporate Plan 2009

⁴⁰ The Ministry was known then as the Ministry of Rural Development - Annual Report, 1986

⁴¹ Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs Annual Corporate Plan 2009

⁴² Ministry of Rural Development, Annual Report, 1986

headquarters and programmes monitored accordingly. Budgetary allocation have been directed to grants to self help, upgrading of non cane access roads, maintenance of non Public Works Road (these are national roads that are maintained by the Government), divisional development projects, rural housing assistance and emergency responses to water. A rural housing unit in the Ministry is responsible for providing assistance to the rural populace in the construction of affordable homes. Not only are these limited to family dwellings but also for community buildings such as meeting halls, schools and churches. In addition the unit is responsible for all rehabilitation works determined by the Ministry when houses in rural areas are damaged following a cyclone or hurricane. In 2008, the Ministry was allocated 4.6 million dollars for self-help and community development projects. In 2010 funds for the former had decreased to 3 million dollars and funds for the latter remained at 2.5 million dollars from 2008.

5.5 Scope of Service

In view of administrative divisions being headed by Commissioners it is responsible for administering service and developments in the divisions. The Commissioner Central Division would be responsible for instance for the Central division which is made up of 5 provinces and services a population of 340,843 (2007 Census). As part of its Non-Cane Access Roads programme new farm roads are made for agricultural commodities like traditional root crops, vegetables and crops grown by the farmers themselves. The upgrading of Non-PWD rural roads which are funded by the Government provide the link between those in rural areas and cities. The grant to self help provide assistance to the building of infrastructure such as the village dispensary, church, footpaths, community halls, sanitation, seawall etc. These most commonly were projects that improved the well being of the rural dwellers and more often than not failed to generate income. Policies on the supply of water

and electricity to rural areas are based on demand from the communities. They contribute a third of the total cost of the project, while the government foots two thirds. Relevant departments were unable to supply data on how many of the 1171 villages in Fiji had yet to have access to electricity,

The rural electrification projects are allocated 5 million dollars annually in the national budget while urban and regional water supplies are allocated close to 50,236.9 million. Rural water supply is only allocated up to 2.3 million dollars.⁴³ Communities in the rural sector are required to contribute towards projects whether it be access to water or electricity for capital outlays, however, this is not required in urban and regional centres.

5.6 Challenges

The challenges of development in the rural areas are common in almost all the four divisions. The remoteness of some villages and the isolation of maritime islands dictate the kinds of development in those areas in particular if they lack the proper infrastructure development. The Ministry notes that transportation to outer islands is often an obstacle to the timely delivery of materials to where they are needed and as a result delay and restricts development and improvements to standards of living for rural dwellers.

Staffing is also inadequate to meet the demands required for development activities, and a contributing factor to this, is a lack of expertise in the fields of economics, planning, and rural development.

In such a scenario, the incidence of poverty is rife. According to the Preliminary Report on

⁴³ These figures are provided in the Fiji Budget Estimate 2010.

Poverty 2010, poverty has increased from 40% to 43% during 2005-06 and in 2008-09.⁴⁴ In terms of rural areas there is a deterioration of standards of living with the percentage of households in poverty increasing from 35% (2002-2003) to 37% (2008-2009).⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Narsey, Raikoti, Waqavonovono, Poverty and Household Incomes in Fiji in 2008-09, 2010

⁴⁵ *ibid*

CHAPTER 6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

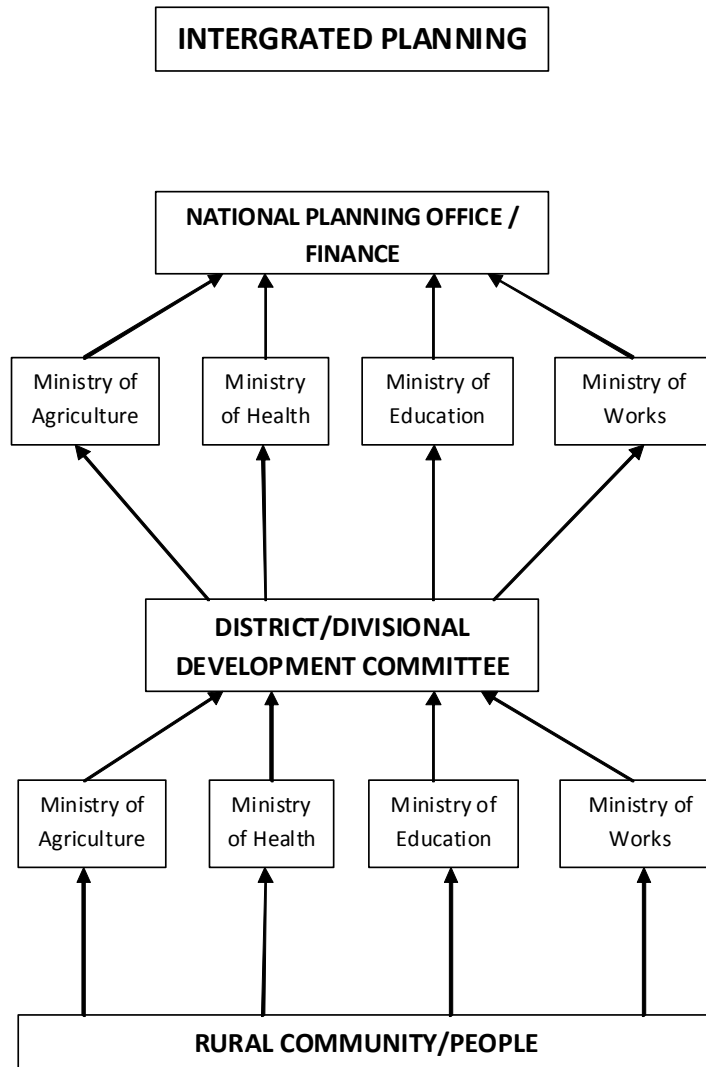
In line with Kyong-Dong Kim's (1979) views, the Integrated development approach is a goal oriented one and sees development as a "value laden concept"⁴⁶. The approach according to him allows for comprehensive changes in the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of institutions.

The alternative approaches explained ahead provide new frontiers to ideas of rural development that can help raise the standards of living of rural dwellers but more importantly to allow for economic development in rural areas. While they do not offer immediate solutions to the problem of rural development lag, they provide alternatives that can be adopted in rural development administration. While the second approach, the Saemaul-Undong is known for its track record of changing the face of the rural sector in South Korea; the effectiveness of the first approach, ie the integrated development structure is yet to be fully tested in Fiji.

6.1 The Integrated Development Structure

The Integrated Development Structure has arisen out of dissatisfaction with the limitations of the currently practiced sectoral approach and the adoption of strategic plans. Illustrated below is the integrated development approach espoused by the People's Charter for Change and Progress and supported by the Ministry of Provincial Development as an alternative to the sectoral approach.

⁴⁶ Kyong-Dong Kim (1979), *Man and Society in Korea's Economic Growth*, p.84.



Source: Ministry of Provincial Development, Cabinet Memorandum, August 2009

Fiji's constitution was abrogated on 10th April, 2009, and the interim government placed significant emphasis on the Pillars of the Peoples Charter for Change and Progress. The concern for the lag in rural development is reflected in the Charter's emphasis of Pillar 7 of the document for the development of an integrated development structure at the divisional level as illustrated above.

The roles and responsibilities of the District/Divisional Development Committee included

the endorsement of divisional/district/provincial strategic plans. The Committee would also evaluate and select priorities of each division against the national budget and would further oversee the implementation of development programmes.

The PCCPP notes that the dual system of administration at the rural level through the Provincial and Advisory Councils is a contributing factor to the ethnic misunderstanding and conflicts that have shaken the political life of the Fiji Islands in the past. It also further notes that the existing indigenous administration as a system of governance for indigenous Fijians has been ineffective in the economic development of the rural indigenous Fijian. In addition the fragmented nature of development and planning in the divisions has resulted in the ineffective implementation of programmes. (PCCPP, 2008)

6.2 Principles

The integrated development structure works on the principles of inclusiveness and participatory decision making of Government and the people. It entails the involvement of all stakeholders in the consultation processes and acknowledging the contribution of each party in finding solutions to policy challenges. This is seen as community participation and an exercise of grassroots democracy.⁴⁷

6.3 Structure

The PCCPP proposes that each province establish representative Provincial Development Boards (PDBs) through the integration of Provincial and Advisory Councils. The Ministry of Provincial Development is to play the coordinating role at the divisional, provisional and district levels. The Development Boards at the national, divisional, provisional and district

⁴⁷ ibid

levels are to be the vehicles for consultation. However the Divisional Commissioners are given more powers in terms of decision-making in developing their divisions in line with the appropriate budgetary allocation. In essence then the Development Boards at the Divisional/Provincial levels are chaired by the Commissioners and at the District level the Board is chaired by the District officer.

6.4 The Korean Experience - The Saemaul -Undong

Rural development was expedited in South Korea in the 1970's and the Saemaul-Undong was launched as Korea's model of rural development. It was advocated by its President Park Chung Hee in 1970. It was his decision that wealth accumulated from industrialisation be invested in the rural areas. In 1971, 33,267 villages in Korea were supplied with cement to allow them to implement certain projects. One of the very first initiatives was a self help nationwide movement 'Saemaul-Undong launched by the Government in 1971'⁴⁸. The movement was a catalyst for change in the villages through its leaders and its highest priority was to make improvements to the village infrastructure. The President himself visited villages to encourage the ruling elite to participate in the Saemaul leaders training course and to ensure support, the President called for the co-operation and co-ordination of all national institutions concerned with rural development. His vision was to ensure that agriculture led to self sufficiency in terms of food, increase farmers' income and to change rural conditions for the better.⁴⁹. In addition to this was the inculcation of the philosophy of rural development and personal interests to mobilize societal support and encourage popular participation in the Saemaul movement.

⁴⁸ In-Joung in "The role of the Government in Agriculture and Rural Development" 1987 wrote that President Park Chung Hee saw the importance of developing the rural area to support the industrialization process

⁴⁹ Boyer, William W; and Byong Man Ahn, Rural Development in South Korea, A Sociopolitical Analysis, 1991, London and Toronto: Associated University Press

What resulted from this movement was a highly motivated village population and dedicated community leaders who were change agents in their own communities. Compounded by existing structural characteristics of Korean society, change was significant with the Saemaul Undong. Leaders were chosen from among villages and this was symbolic of democratic decision making at the grass roots level.⁵⁰

The reorganized administrative structures involved an integrated process where there were changes in the values and attitudes of farmers, and produced highly competent and efficient local officials. The evidence that this initiative was working were the changes in village economies and rural infrastructure. Projects were prioritized and assembled by the local administration offices and while the Government emphasized voluntarism in the building of village projects, it began the shift towards improving the quality of rural life to efforts to increase agricultural production⁵¹. The villagers' realization that they were to produce for the market prompted them to work harder. The villagers themselves not only elected Saemaul leaders through village meetings but also made decisions on projects and implementation strategies. Education was expanded and combined with an increase in non-farm jobs and the rural youth had a choice of occupation and lifestyles. The rural populations had worked together successfully imbued with the Saemaul spirit of cooperative self-help.

Villages that had successfully implemented the Saemaul projects were given more support by the Government in the form of sacks of cement and steel. From 1974, villages were classified into three levels, these were namely the basic-level village, self-help village and the self-reliant level village. Different projects were implemented according to their level of achieving Saemaul oriented projects. Government implemented its policy of "Priority

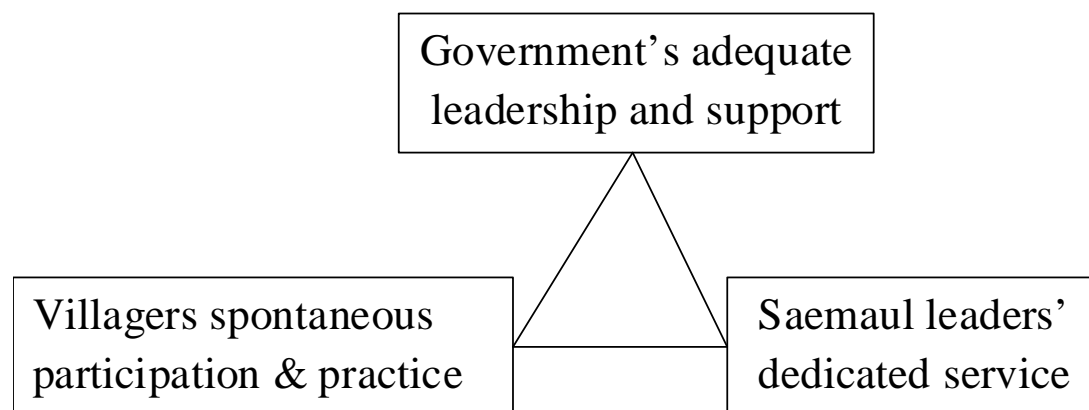
⁵⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹ In-Joung, *The Role of the Government in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 1987

support to outstanding village” and only encouraged villages to perform better (Lee, J, 2009). The identification and recognition of village-specific features and readiness constituted the underlying criteria of project selection at the community level. Selections of the projects were based on identifying common needs and concerns of the villagers themselves.⁵²

The Saemaul-Undong also placed much emphasis on the spiritual aspects of development to encourage diligence, self-help and cooperation. Given these, villagers were confident in making their own decisions. Government had only provided the technical assistance and villagers had the liberty to elect their leaders who selected the kinds of projects for implementation. The formal training of leaders at the Saemaul Training Institute contributed a great deal to the changes in village attitude and reflected in the success of the projects in the villages.

In summary, the Saemaul-Undong was the catalyst of rural development through cooperation of parties as illustrated below:



Source: Jai Chang Lee, President Korea Saemaul-Undong Centre, powerpoint presentation titled Saemaul-Undong in Korea, 2009

⁵² ibid

CHAPTER 7.0 – DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

In summarizing the overall results it is evident that ever since independence, policies on rural development have remained much the same. While goals and objectives have changed with transitions in administrations, the rural development machinery in terms of the processes followed and policies as devised in the years following Fiji's independence have remained the same. This study sought to find what caused the slow and stagnant growth in the rural sector and to provide recommendations that would impact on public policy making relating to rural development in Fiji. The study focused solely on the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs and examined the principles, processes and organization of the existing rural development model it followed. In this exercise the study looked at government policy documents, interviews with Ministry officials and used information from rural development models in the literature review as a comparison. It further looked at lessons from Korea through the Saemaul Movement to determine its usefulness in the Fiji case. In making recommendations it took a step further from a previous study Dubsky (1986), in not only discussing an alternative model but providing reasons why it should be the way forward in developing the rural sector in Fiji. In this chapter the thesis statement is reiterated and analytical references are made to selected aspects of the rural development machinery examined.

Recommendations are set out as action statements to address the limitations of the current rural development model. The findings of this study indicate that there are severe limitations

in the current rural development machinery.

The centralized planning and current sectoral approach mainly paints a picture of a top-down decision making process. While there are guidelines for access of assistance, the coordination required by ministries and stakeholders in the planning, implementation and monitoring processes are lacking. This lack of co-ordination results in communities double dipping from other Ministries that also offer rural development services. The absence of an information database system pose serious challenges to funding and human resource provisions.

Under the sectoral approach, Ministries are more concerned about their own achievements and organise their own planning accordingly. With this focus, there consultations are not observed and co-ordination amongst Ministries are absent. Such an approach places strain on human resource, technology and finances. It lacks consideration of wastage of scarce resources.

The three major approaches to rural development under the development plans following independence in 1970 have generally remained; namely self help (community contributes and government completes balance), community/government partnership (1/3 community contribution, 2/3 government) and fully funded government projects. Programmes highlighted in **Appendix IV** are still being offered by the government. Yet the percentage of poverty to date has failed to indicate that the programmes are a remedy to this challenge.

Although economic activities are initiated by other Ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare, the quantum would be inadequate to bring economic revival to the rural sector. Fiji's key exports are rural based (tourism, agriculture, forestry and fisheries), however, over the years, activities in these

sectors continue to show decline. Loans to sugar cane farming have declined from 47% of all agricultural loans in 2000 to close to 5% in 2009. As a major economic activity in the rural sector, sugar cane farming is no longer attractive and generally reflects that economic activities have worsened in the rural areas between 2002-03 and 2008-09⁵³. The lack of reporting on economic activities is a concern. While the Ministry of Provincial Development (2008) reports on capital expenditure programmes which include grants to self help type assistance, non cane access roads upgrade, maintenance of non public works roads, rural housing assistance and emergency response to water, what is not captured in specific terms is the nature and number of income generating opportunities under the Ministry's outputs.

Coupled with this, is the concern for the absence of a general legal framework of dispensing rural development programmes. Such limitations give leeway to each ministry including the Ministry of Provincial Development to be concerned only with its own programmes, thus overlooking the need for long term planning which take other Ministries into account.

7.2 Legal Framework

From the official documents that were sourced it was found that there was no comprehensive legal framework to cover rural development in general. While there were rules and guidelines for accessibility to rural project assistance, what was absent, was a general legal framework for the administration of rural programmes for all ministries and non governmental agencies involved in such initiatives. In the absence of such a law therefore, there were no restrictions for accessing assistance of one kind from a ministry and another kind from another ministry. What can be deduced is that without a relevant law, cases of

⁵³ Preliminary Report on Poverty and Household Incomes in Fiji in 2008-09

double dipping and hence duplication of resources would be rife in unequal development as more communities are deprived of much needed assistance.

Under the current model, no ministry is required by any law to consult with others should the assistance sought have elements of overlapping. As a result each ministry works individually to meet its own output.

Given the complexities in rural programmes delivery across sectors and across administrative boundaries, some form of legal framework must exist. It is suggested that the poor co-ordination of rural development across sectors and administrations, resulting in double dipping, wastage of resources and slow development is a result of the absence of a legal framework. Nothing binds sectors legally in delivering their rural programmes except for the guidelines in policies and budgetary allocations. What is lacking is a general binding rural development legal framework per se to cover Government and non-Government agencies.

7.3 Principles

According to Osborne, and Plastrick (2000) a vision is an expressed shared commitment by an organization to creating a future that it wants to create for itself and a mission a shared understanding of its basic purpose. The vision and mission of the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs are noble in this regard, however, the pursuit of these, notions of security and prosperity must add up to self-reliance so that the Ministry sees the rural sector as autonomous in terms of making a meaningful contribution to the national economy. While the welfare and prosperity of rural communities are important goals, the Ministry's vision should be to ensure that there is sustainability and that the goals must be reflected in policies and programmes.

The policies of self-help, partial contributions from Government and community and fully funded government assistance suggest future dependence on what is available. The programmes have continued on since independence and suggest the dependence rural communities have on such provisions given annually by the Government. While the budgetary allocation for self-help projects increased in 2008 from 1.4 million dollars to 3million dollars the programmes are not as economically empowering to take them away from an environment of dependence. Projections are that in 2011 to 2012 the same budgetary allocation would be provided and thus the continuation of projects that perpetuate an environment of dependence.⁵⁴

7.4 Top-Down Approach

The current design in the consultation process illustrates a top-down approach, where those whom the programmes matter most are so far remote from decision-making. The sectoral approach on section 4.5 illustrates this point. From such a distance, those at the local levels are not given the opportunity to adapt the programmes to their needs, because clear objectives and goals are already set from the top. Birkland (2005) notes that in such approaches, there is an assumption that policies have clearly defined policy tools for the accomplishment of goals. The implication would be that programmes and policies are permanent and villagers and communities must go along with them, regardless of their needs. According to Birkland (2005) the assumption of a centralized type administration “assumes a unitary method of decision making that ignores competing or overlapping agencies and their staff...” p.18

⁵⁴ Fiji Budget Estimate 2010

7.5 Information Management

The importance of effective information management cannot be overemphasized in any institution, because it allows decisions to be made for the future and lessons to be taken from the past. The absence of a centralized database in the Ministry to capture rural development programmes and delivery in all sectors warrants serious attention. This is important because rural development initiatives are not the sole business of the Ministry of Provincial Development. What can result is wastage and abuse of resources and the establishment of a reliable inter-sectoral and agency database is crucial in this regard.

7.6 Policy Changes

The literature is limited in its indications of whether existing programmes have been productive in terms of sustainability and how much they contribute to the national economy. These same programmes are accessed annually by villages and rural communities and can be symptoms of dependence on the government to always deliver, given that they are always available year in and year out. The Ministry has remained generally with practices and policies for 39 years and the adverse consequence of continuing without any advances on industrialisation in the rural sector is taxing on the economy. The self-help and partial type contributions by communities and government, as well as full government funding have not decreased unemployment and poverty in rural areas. They have not decreased rural-urban drift and have not made rural areas into vibrant and attractive places to visit. The 2002-2003 Household Income and Expenditure Survey record that the rural household average income for the whole of Fiji is \$10,558 compared to \$15,267 in urban areas.⁵⁵ The situation has remained the same in 2008-09, with the average annual income in rural areas recording

⁵⁵ Bureau of Statistics, Fiji Facts and Figures as at 1 July, 2009

11,608 compared to 23,036 in urban areas.⁵⁶ It is in this vein that policies and programmes must be urgently changed to what would work. While infrastructural changes and assisting in self-help community programmes are progressive, it is also very important to invest in individuals. By investing in their training in leadership, planning, entrepreneurship, they are geared for life to develop themselves and their communities. The Saemaul- Undong movement in Korea exemplified such an outlook by educating village leaders who in turn educate their people on methods of economic production to suit their local conditions and share new knowledge amongst themselves of how to increase income and better their living conditions. Of interest for example was the plan for a division of agricultural districts into specialized crops that best suited the district environmental conditions. Again plans were coordinated at the grassroots level and not solely determined by the government.

7.7 Spiritual Awakening

The notion of Fiji as a country that takes religion seriously by practice, is not clearly evident in daily life. The argument therefore in this study, is that if philosophies of hard work, honesty and compassion from religion are applied as important principles of development in rural development programmes, then half the task would be done. In this regard, Fiji has a lot to learn from the Korean example of the Saemaul Movement; in its spirit of diligence, self-reliance and co-operation. As a modernization tool, it emphasized spiritual, economic and social development. Kim (1980) believed that these transformed passive and stagnant attitudes into positive and dynamic policy. Incorporating these into new policies and programmes that are people centred would bring about the dynamism needed to boost the rural sector and its dwellers.

⁵⁶ Preliminary Report Poverty and Household Incomes in Fiji in 2008-09

7.8 Interviews

Interviews with officials of the Ministry highlighted the limitations of the current rural development machinery. As discussed earlier, the lack of a rural development framework gives communities the leeway to take advantage of what is offered at the expense of denying other deserving communities. It was noted in the interviews that the absence of a central database for all forms of rural development assistance in ministries involved perpetuates this problem. For example the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, which administers the village improvement scheme, would have no way of knowing that the same community that is seeking this assistance has also sought assistance in the Ministry of Provincial development under the self help assistance programme.

It was noted that with the absence of a central database, the importance of observing good records management in all offices of the consultative machinery even up to the village level would be watered down. This, however, should be practiced and required by law for it would be on the basis of these records that future policy decisions and improvements are made.

CHAPTER 8.0 – RECOMMENDATIONS

The pursuit of this study has been to focus on the rural development machinery in the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs and examine its effectiveness as the administrative body for implementing development initiatives in rural Fiji. The position taken in this study is that there is a dire need to reform the development machinery. It is reiterated that the present system has been in place for a long time and since then the world and accordingly Fiji has changed in terms of its political, economic and social scenario. Huntington (1968) discusses that the stress of modernization on a developing nation can result in violence and disorder when institutions lag behind social and economic change which in the writer's view would not be far from the truth in Fiji's case. It is in the interest of Fiji then, in the case of rural development that fundamental changes are made urgently.

It must be noted, however, that the study did not delve into each of the offices in the organization structure of the rural development machinery to examine their roles and their effectiveness and provides scope for further research into human resource. A more balanced approach of the study would have been to also acquire in detail the responses of the recipients of the programme which would have provided more insights into effectiveness and their preferences for development. Another area that deserves further study is whether the research question in this study can be answered by examining the roots of political instability.

The following recommendations are limited to what has been discussed in the findings of this study specifically and do not profess to provide the ultimate solutions to rural development challenges but nevertheless provide a glimmer of light.

Consideration should be given to the drawing up of a comprehensive legal framework for rural development that gives direction to Government and non-Government agencies. The framework will entail a professional approach to rural development initiatives planned and implemented. Monitoring and evaluation of such projects should be well captured as a result of this professionalism.

It should ensure a vision and mission that translate into sustainability in the programmes delivered so that over the years the non-productive self-help type assistance described in **Appendix IV** are phased out and replaced by income generating activities resulting in self-reliance as opposed to depending on handouts by the Government. It would be essential hence that Government creates through the Ministry of Agriculture a National Agricultural Economics Research Institute, similar to that of the Korean Government. Working with the Ministry of Agriculture and non government agencies and regional institutes, it would take on the important role of research into suitable agriculture, forests, fisheries, cultivation and processing innovations.

The recently introduced Landuse Decree 2010 which allows for the leasing of land for productive usage would boost economic activities in the rural sector, if the Land Bank services receive wide publicity and are strategically located at all divisional centres to facilitate landowner wishes to give up their land for productive uses.

The integrated approach rather than the sectoral approach should receive strong support so that the potentials of resources in the divisions are captured and aligned to national economic goals. With a bottom-up approach there is better consultation with the grassroots who have the opportunity to express their views on how best their lives could be improved in consultation with qualified planners in the regional administration. The grassroots democracy concept explained by Kyong-Dong Kim (1979) is well expressed at these levels.

The role of Commissioners in the integrated model would require a fundamental restructure of its reporting line if they are to have autonomy in funding and programme priorities decisions. This could mean their appointments as heads of divisional administrations who would not necessarily have to report to the Ministry of Provincial Development. They would report to the Prime Minister given the autonomy given to them and responsibilities they are assigned. The model at **Appendix VI** illustrates Commissioners assuming the role of Chief accounting officers of their divisions and thus their promotion to the Permanent Secretary level. In this capacity they are allowed to express autonomy and drive policies according to the needs of the division they administer. The Divisional Development Board would play a very crucial role in that regard, in terms of deciding what is priority in consultation with the communities and interests served in a division.

In view of this fundamental change, the role of the Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs' can be reviewed with a view to it being downgraded to a department to oversee the operations of a national rural development institute similar to that of the Saemaul Undong institute, to specifically train selected and Government sponsored individuals from rural communities. The individuals in turn are bound by the Government and are supported accordingly to make changes in their respective communities in respect of developing the rural sector.

In addition there should be investments made in high quality information management and training at all levels of administration and at the inter-governmental and inter-agency levels.

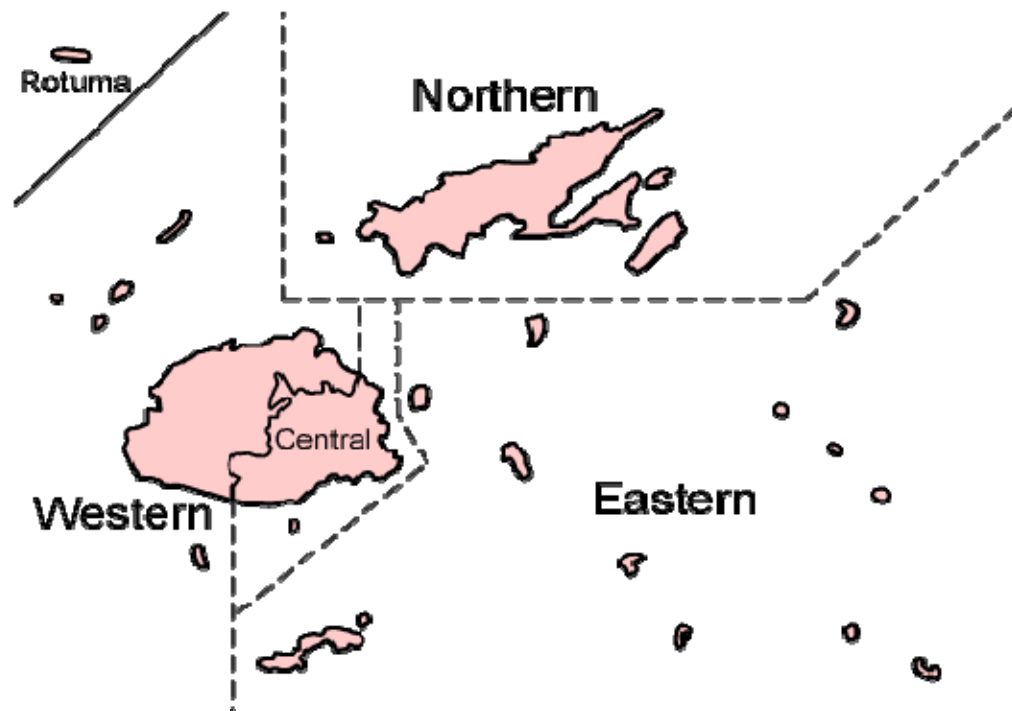
Adopting practices of the Saemaul-Undong in terms of incorporating spiritual values and investing in training and employment creation opportunities would be a first step in changing mindsets so that they are geared towards self determination and self reliance in almost all aspects of development.

In respect of access to water and electricity, the policies of government should change so that access is not available by demand of the communities and their contribution , but through goal oriented approaches of ensuring that by a certain timeframe, all 1171 villages and settlements would have access to these amenities. Government has a social obligation to provide good clean water to the people and as part of its social justice commitment should aim as a matter of priority that all villages and rural settlements have access to water and electricity by 2014. If this then were to be the case, then the current policy of community contribution should be phased out. The community would still have ownership of projects under this arrangement as they would be supplying the relevant project labour, materials and maintenance.

CHAPTER 9.0 CONCLUSION

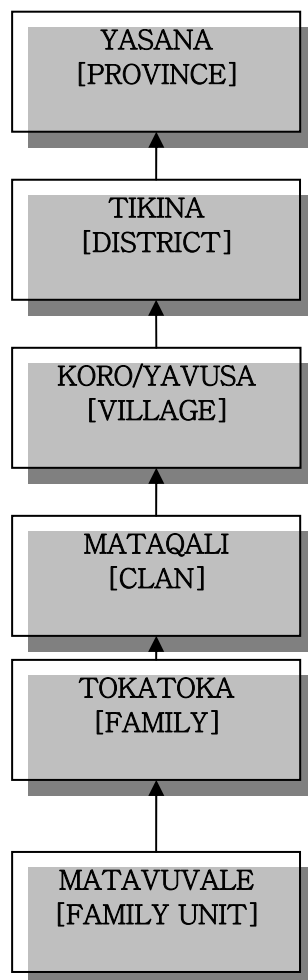
The study brings to the fore the potentials that exist in the Fiji Islands for the development of its people and its resources. It is faced with many constraints as a developing nation; small, vulnerable to natural disasters, governance challenges and a history of political instability. However, these can be turned into opportunities for growth in this era of globalization. It can do so by focusing closely on the rural sector, granting it the incentives and resources it needs to boost its potential in improving the national economy while at the same time raising the standards of its dwellers to levels that allow them to be self reliant. The current administration should be supported in its life changing initiatives and policies. The participation of civil societies, the private sector and foreign donors is crucial in this partnership of rural sector development. While poverty alleviation mechanisms are significant, they would be futile if there are no aspirations by the people to be economically independent and self reliant. The recommendations in this study while not exhaustive, attempt to provide some thoughts that hopefully would gradually change perspectives for a new and vibrant rural sector in Fiji.

APPENDIX I: Divisional Administrations



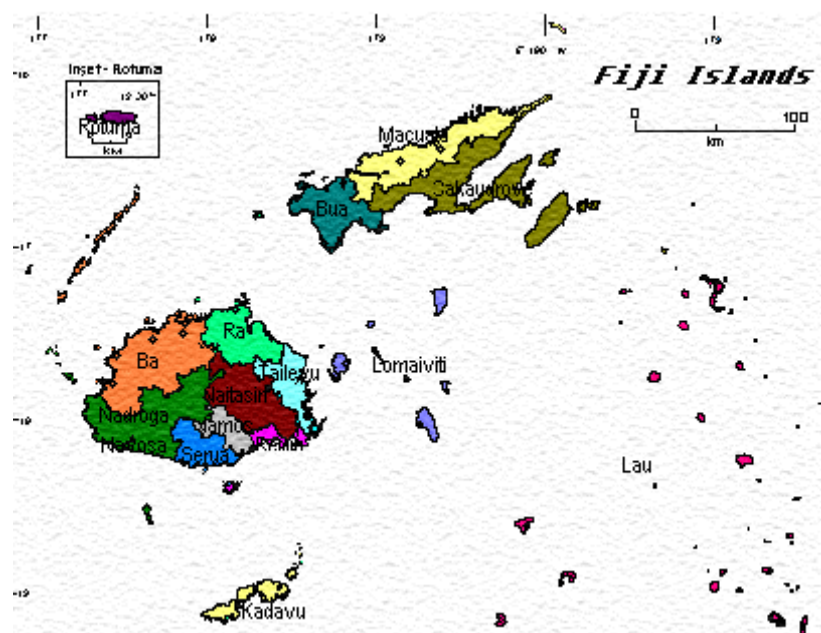
Source: Wikipedia

APPENDIX II (a): The Fijian Administration System



Source: Fiji Today 2006-2007

APPENDIX II (b): 14 Provinces of the Fiji Islands

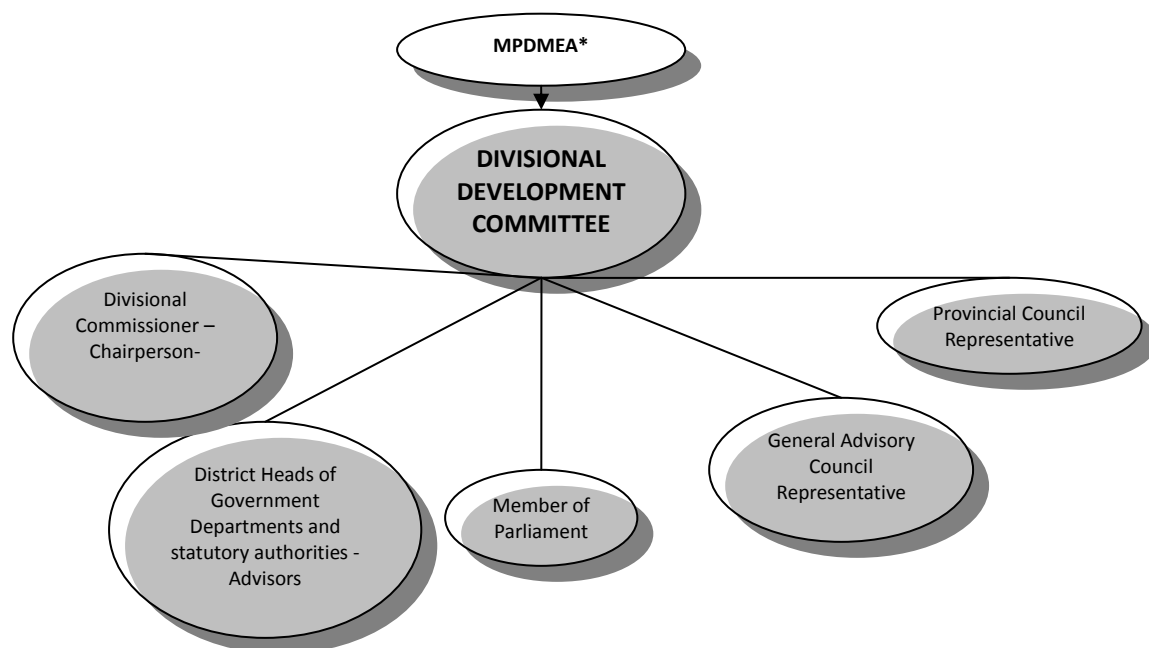


Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

KEY:

BA	LAU
NADROGA/NAVOSA	CAKAUDROVE
SERU	BUA
NAMOSI	MACUATA
NAITASIRI	LOMAIVITI
TAILEVU	KADAVU
REWA	RA

APPENDIX III: Government Rural Machinery



* Ministry of Provincial Development and Multi-Ethnic Affairs

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Annual Report, 1986

APPENDIX IV: Self Help Projects – 1986

Central Division - Commissioner Central Tailevu Provincial Council Projects

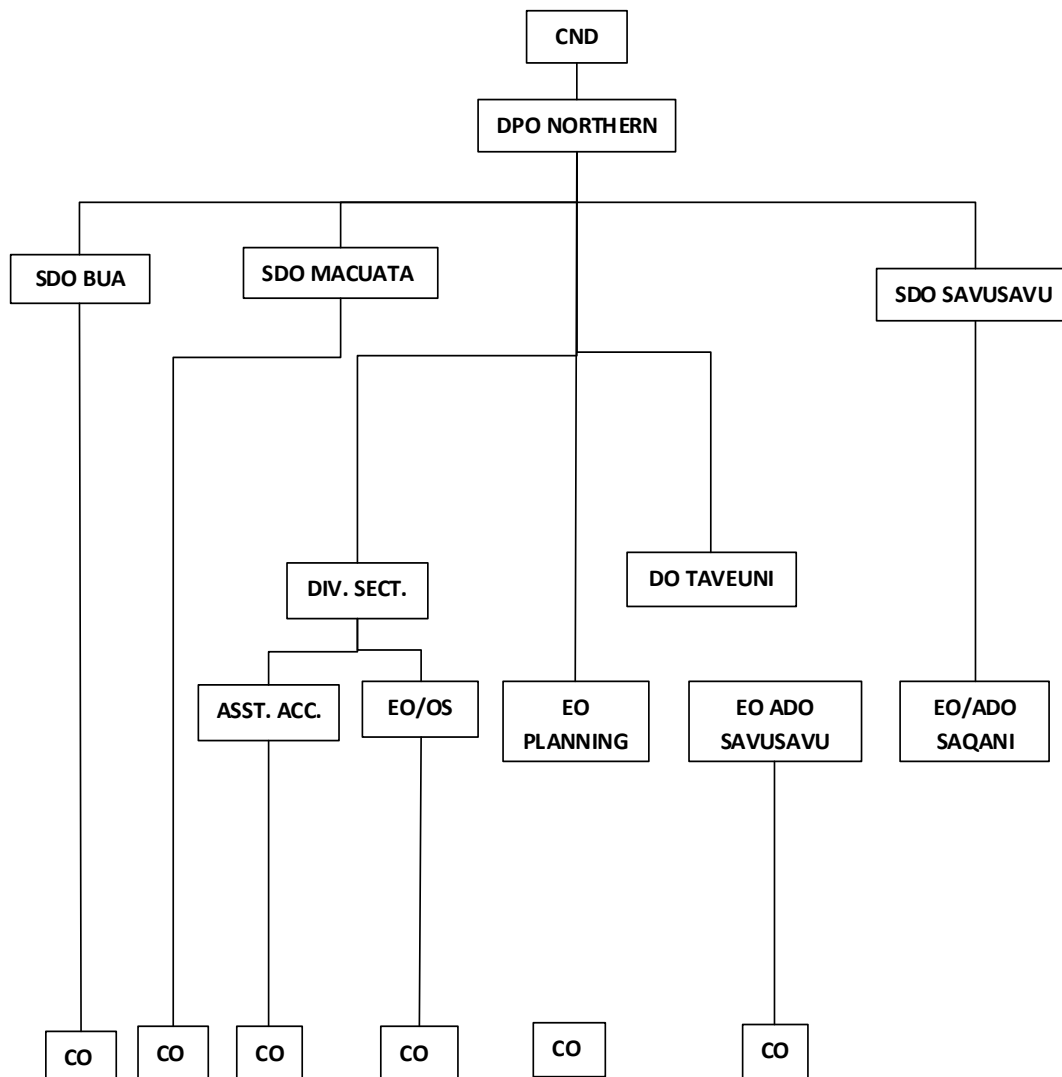
Projects and Locations	Community Contribution	Government Contribution	Total Cost
Waivou Community Hall	nil	\$2,824.11	\$2,824.11
Nukui Seawall	nil	\$275.00	\$275.00
Rewa Provincial Office – purchase of punt and engine	nil	\$1,220.00	\$1,220.00
Nadoi Community Hall	\$13.17	\$2,411.30	\$2,442.47
Nasali Methodist Circuit	\$300.00	\$811.82	\$1,111.82
Naililili Catholic Mission	nil	\$498.40	\$498.40

Northern Division - Commissioner Northern

Project Type	Community Contribution	Government Contribution	Total Cost
Community Hall	\$1,020.00 & labour	\$7,502.20	\$8,522.20
Bus shelters	labour	\$1,400.00	\$1,400.00
Foot bridge	labour	\$500.00	\$500.00
Cemetery Project	\$1,450.00	\$2,561.21	\$4,011.21
Water Supply	\$100.00 & labour	\$520.10	\$620.10
Suspension Bridge	labour	\$1,533.00	\$1,533.00

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Annual Report 1986

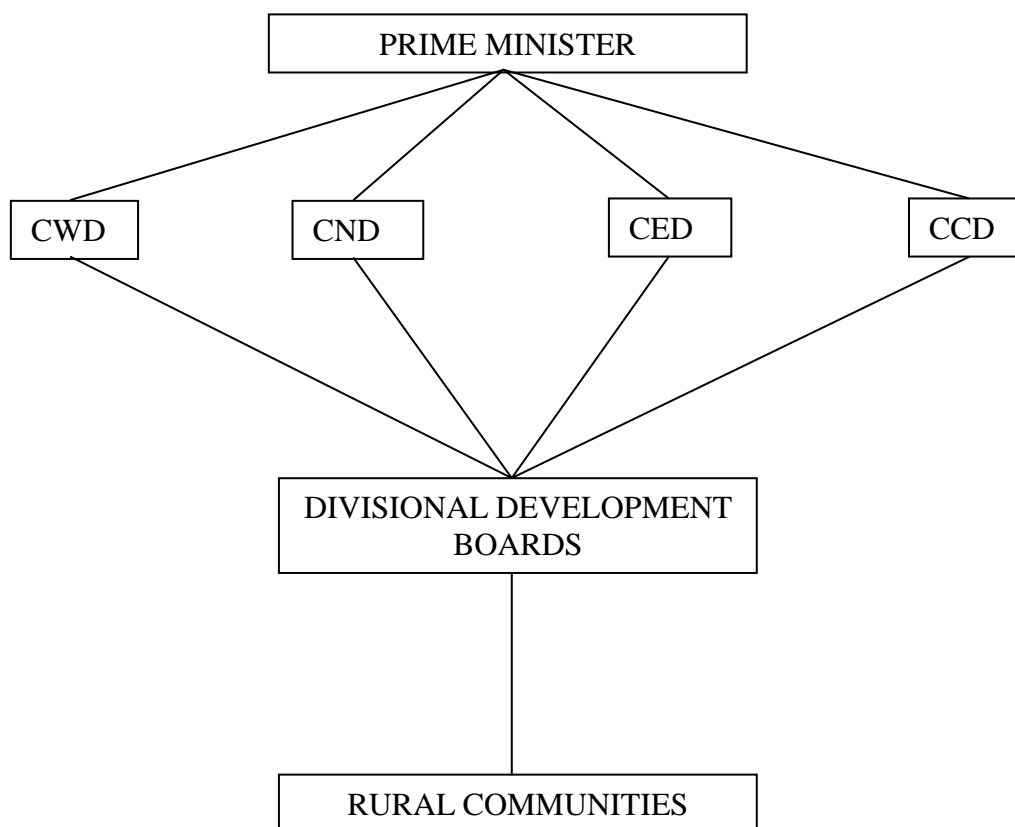
APPENDIX V: Divisional Administration Structure - 1986



KEY

Commissioner	1
DPO	1
Senior Admin Officer	3
Admin. Officer DO/DIV SEC.	1 DO 1 DIV. SEC
Executive Officer/Asst. Acct.	4 EO 1 Asst. Acct
Clerical Officer	6

APPENDIX VI: Recommended Structure of Divisional Administration



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